The influence of humble leadership on employees' proactive behavior in chain hotels

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Abstract:

In recent years, humble leadership has gained popularity. Researchers and managers respect humble leaders, especially in today's fast-paced economic world. There is little theoretical and empirical research on small leadership's effectiveness. Leadership style strongly affects employees' behavior. Humble leaders—self-aware, open to feedback, and appreciative—improve staff performance, according to research. Research shows humble leadership boosts employee engagement and satisfaction. The effectiveness of modest leadership in fostering proactive employee behavior needs further study. This literature study examines how humble leadership styles effect hotel chain employees' initiative. Conscientiousness moderates modest leadership and proactive activities, according to research. Researchers found that conscientiousness boosted modest leadership's effect on proactive behavior across cultures. Conscientiousness mediates modest leadership and proactive action. Modest leadership supported proactive activities because conscientiousness buffered the interaction. When leaders displayed humility by applauding coworkers' talents and accomplishments, staff, especially conscientious ones, felt more faith in their own abilities. Companies that respect conscientiousness as a cultural characteristic are more likely to link humble leadership and proactive actions. Humble leaders' styles may impact conscientiousness' moderating effect.

Keywords: Humble Leadership; Employees' Proactive Behavior; Chain Hotels

INTRODUCTION

The study of organizational behavior and leadership has seen a growing emphasis on leadership styles and their effects on employee outcomes. Humble leadership, which encompasses qualities like self-awareness, receptiveness to input, and recognition of others, has become a pivotal element in shaping organizational dynamics and employee conduct. The purpose of this opening chapter is to provide a foundation for a comprehensive examination of the connection between modest leadership and its impact on employees' proactive behavior, psychological empowerment, as well as the moderating influences of peer support and conscientiousness. In the current business landscape, characterized by swift transformations, growing intricacy, and fierce rivalry, it is imperative to adopt a leadership approach that not only adjusts to these

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obstacles but also enables and inspires people to actively participate to the achievement of company goals. Humble leadership, characterized by introspection, acknowledgement of personal constraints, and appreciation of employee input, is a promising approach to cultivating a work environment that promotes employee initiative, innovation, and proactive involvement. The objective of this study is to explore the intricacies of how modest leadership influences employees' feelings of empowerment and proactive action. The study will also investigate the impact of psychological empowerment in mediating this link, as well as the effects of peer support and conscientiousness in moderating it. This study holds particular significance within the context of chain hotels, a market characterized by dynamism and competition, where modest leadership has the potential to impact employees' proactive behavior.

The existing research on proactive behavior lacks systematicity, and despite extensive investigation into the antecedent variables, result variables, and processes of proactive conduct, the broader mechanisms underlying proactive behavior remain inadequately comprehended. The absence of a comprehensive theory to provide guidance for the entire research field necessitates researchers to persist in conducting thorough investigations (Zhang and Liao, 2019; Hu et al., 2019). While proactive activity from employees is advantageous for corporate operations, research has indicated that a larger number of employees have become acclimated to passively adapting to their environment and accepting work arrangements (Parker, 2000; 2006). Hence, the matter of how organizations may encourage employees' proactive behavior and harness their unique initiative in light of changes in the external environment has garnered significant attention from researchers and managers (Aspinwall, 2020).

The hospitality business is known for its service-oriented orientation and is especially vulnerable to employee turnover. As per the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2019) study, the hospitality sector has one of the highest yearly turnover rates among industries, estimated to be approximately 73.8%. The frequent occurrence of employees leaving their jobs can be mostly linked to issues such as discontentment with their work, absence of authority, and insufficient guidance from leaders (Hinkin & Tracey, 2018). Recent studies indicate that the yearly employee turnover rate in China's hotel business is 25%, surpassing the global average (Zhang & Li, 2019). This problem highlights the pressing need for proficient leadership styles, particularly in terms of enhancing staff motivation and retention.

The concept of humble leadership has gained significant attention in recent years as an emerging leadership style. Many scholars and managers recognize the importance of humble traits in leaders, particularly in today's rapidly evolving organizational environment. However, the effectiveness of humble leadership has not yet been fully justified and evaluated through theoretical and empirical research (Qu et al., 2019).The leadership style has a crucial impact on developing the attitudes and behaviors of employees. Specifically, the practice of humble leadership, which prioritizes self-awareness, receptiveness to feedback, and recognition of others, has been proven to influence the results achieved by employees. Owens, Johnson, and Mitchell (2013) conducted research that establishes a favorable correlation between modest leadership and employee engagement and satisfaction. Additionally, they found that employee engagement and contentment are inversely connected to turnover intentions.

Further investigation is needed to see if humble leadership styles effectively encourage proactive activities among employees. Zhang et al. (2019) determined that the existing scholarly studies on employee-initiated behavior primarily concentrate on the person level. However, they found that the potential benefits of relying solely on individual-level adjustments to encourage proactive conduct in businesses are restricted. The potential benefits

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of implementing team or organizational level adjustments to encourage proactive behavior may be more apparent.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Recent Issues and Development of Humble Leadership Worldwide

Humble leadership has gained significant recognition in worldwide business and academic communities in recent years. The interest in this subject arises from a developing comprehension of the components that constitute effective leadership within the framework of a swiftly shifting global environment. This section explores the latest advancements and current challenges in the field of modest leadership on a worldwide level. The growing interconnectedness of the global economy has required a change in leadership approaches. Organizations encounter a varied workforce and a wider array of stakeholders, necessitating leaders who can adeptly manage cultural disparities and emphasize global outlooks. The humble leadership strategy, which prioritizes diversity and a willingness to consider many perspectives, has become essential in this situation. Leaders are now more frequently required to exhibit cultural humility, recognizing the variety of experiences and viewpoints in their decision-making procedures (Smith & Taylor, 2019).

The swift progression of technology, namely in the domains of digital transformation and artificial intelligence, has had a substantial influence on leadership approaches. In the technology sector, humble leadership is becoming more closely linked with the qualities of adaptability and ongoing learning. In order to remain relevant and inventive in a technology-driven corporate environment, it is crucial to possess the capacity to recognize one's lack of expertise and to maintain receptiveness to new ideas (Wang & Zheng, 2021).

There has been a noticeable change towards leadership models that prioritize the needs and well-being of employees. In today's day, when employee engagement and well-being are crucial for the success of an organization, modest leaders that focus actively listening to their teams and appreciating their contributions are demonstrating greater effectiveness. This transition corresponds to the increasing acknowledgment of the significance of mental well-being in the professional setting and the influence of leadership in cultivating a nurturing work atmosphere (Johnson, 2020).

With the growing importance of sustainability and ethical business practices, humble leadership is increasingly seen as a crucial element in tackling these difficulties. Leaders who demonstrate humility are more inclined to contemplate the enduring consequences of their decisions on the environment and society. This phenomenon signifies a more extensive transition towards conscientious leadership and the practice of corporate social responsibility (Chen & Lee, 2019).Although humble leadership is becoming increasingly popular, it nevertheless encounters several problems and criticisms. An important issue is that modest leadership may be seen as a lack of confidence or assertiveness, especially in countries where more forceful leadership styles are customary. Moreover, the incorporation of modest leadership techniques can pose difficulties in hierarchical organizational frameworks, where power dynamics and conventional management practices may impede the acceptance of such approaches (Li & Long, 2018).

In a study conducted by Owens et al. (2013), it was discovered that leaders who exhibit modest attitudes had a positive impact on both the individual performance and situational performance of their staff. A study conducted by Ou et al. (2014) discovered that CEOs who possess humility have a positive impact on the work performance of middle managers. Additionally, the study

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revealed that an empowering organizational climate plays a role in partially mediating the relationship between modest CEOs and middle managers' performance. Owens and Wallace (2015) discovered that under the context of narcissistic leadership, a greater degree of humility had a more positive impact on subordinate performance compared to a lesser degree of humility. The research conducted by Luo et al. (2015) validated that there is a favorable correlation between modest leaders and employee job performance. Furthermore, it was found that the relationship is completely mediated by psychological safety.

The study conducted by Owens et al. (2013) provided empirical evidence supporting the notion that leader humility has a positive impact on employee engagement. The study conducted by Ou et al. (2014) found that a CEO who displays humility fosters a sense of commitment and enthusiasm in middle managers towards their task. The study conducted by Yao (2016) also demonstrated that humble leaders enhance the work engagement of their subordinates. In their study on narcissistic leaders, Owens, and Wallace (2015) discovered that narcissistic leaders who exhibited high levels of humility were able to generate greater subordinate involvement compared to those with low levels of humility.

Tang et al. (2015) conducted a study that established a favorable correlation between humble leadership characteristics and employee engagement. The study conducted by Li Shaolong et al. (2015) revealed a positive correlation between engaged leadership and employees' proactive change practices. In their study, Liao et al. (2017) discovered that leaders who engage in acts of opening doors and expressing appreciation towards others have a noteworthy influence on the occurrence of organizational citizenship behaviors. In a study conducted by Ye (2014), it was discovered that leaders who display humble behaviors can effectively encourage their subordinates to propose suggestions. According to Wang et al. (2015), the implementation of "bottom-up" leadership has been found to effectively decrease subordinates' tendency to avoid giving feedback. In a study conducted by Ni (2017), it was demonstrated that modest leaders had a favorable impact on the feedback seeking behaviors of managers. Zhang (2017) suggests that modest leaders exert a favorable influence on employees' inhibitory recommendations. Research conducted by Lei et al. (2015, 2017) demonstrates that modest leadership behavior has a favorable impact on staff creativity. According to Wang's (2016, 2017) research findings, modest leadership has a beneficial impact on employee creativity and influences their inventive behavior in a positive manner. According to Wang's (2017) study, humble leadership has a notable and beneficial effect on the innovative behavior of employees.

Furthermore, several experts have highlighted the adverse impact of modest leadership on the inventiveness of subordinates. According to Chen et al. (2017), modest leadership has been found to improve employees' creativity when there is mild time pressure. Nevertheless, in environments characterized by either excessive time constraints or excessive idleness, the presence of modest leadership can impede employees' ability to think creatively. Research has indicated that humble leaders have the ability to enhance employees' psychological stability (Lei et al., 2015; Luo et al., 2015). Tang et al. (2015) shown that the display of humble leadership behaviors has a favorable impact on the organizational self-esteem of subordinates. In a study conducted by Yao (2016), it was discovered that modest leaders have the ability to foster employees' psychological freedom, exert a favorable impact on employees' self-efficacy and motivation to contribute, and also strengthen employees' trust and loyalty towards organizational leaders. The reference is Wang (2017). The presence of humble leadership has a notable and beneficial impact on the innovative self-efficacy of employees.

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Several research have indicated that humble leaders have a beneficial impact on the job satisfaction of their subordinates (Nielsen et al., 2010; Luo et al., 2015). The study conducted by Nielsen et al. (2010) found that humble leaders who display cooperative and caring behaviors have a positive impact on their subordinates' job attitudes. This, in turn, leads to higher satisfaction among the subordinates. Ou et al. (2014) conducted a study which revealed that CEOs who possess humility have a positive impact on the emotional dedication of middle managers. According to Owens and Hekman (2012), humble leaders enhance subordinate loyalty by fostering trust between leaders and subordinates. In addition, Owens et al. (2013) discovered that the display of modest leadership behavior reduces employees' inclination to voluntarily resign. Qu et al. (2013) conducted a study on 153 teams in 45 Chinese organizations and discovered that modest leaders had a beneficial impact on subordinates' organizational identity, even after considering the influence of paternalistic leadership.

Several experts have conducted research on the influence of modest leadership on organizations. In a study conducted by Morris (2005), it was found that the presence of humility in a leader has a good impact on both organizational learning and organizational resilience. Owens et al. (2013) conducted a study that also found that leader humility has a favorable impact on team learning. Owens and Hekman (2016) conducted an empirical study which revealed that employees tend to emulate the modest behavior of their leaders. This imitation creates a "dropping effect," whereby subordinates who observe and perceive their leaders' humble behavior are likely to learn from it and then show humility behavior themselves. The cultivation of humility within the team will enhance the organization's maximal potential and eventually enhance team performance. In their study, Han et al. (2016) examined how humble leaders influence the innovation patterns within organizations. They discovered that humble leaders have a positive effect on both breakthrough innovation and incremental innovation. However, the impact of humble leaders on breakthrough innovation was not found to be statistically significant, whereas their impact on incremental innovation was found to be statistically significant. In addition, modest leadership has a good impact on both market orientation and technological orientation.

Owens and Hekman (2012), experts in humble leadership, highlight the limitations of the impact of humble leadership behaviors. They argue that the effectiveness of these behaviors is also influenced by the leader's individual characteristics and environmental factors. For instance, when comparing a competent and sincere leader to an incompetent and hypocritical leader, the former's humble leadership conduct will positively influence others, while the latter will simply cause subordinates to view the leader as incompetent and generate a negative opinion.

Recent Issues and Development of Humble Leadership in China
With the growing integration of China's economy into the global market, Chinese enterprises have been compelled to adjust to Western management norms and practices. The process of global integration has presented both obstacles and possibilities for leaders in China who possess a humble approach. Chinese leaders have been acquainted with a variety of leadership styles, particularly from Western nations, where ideas such as employee empowerment, open communication, and flat organizational structures are more commonly used. Chinese leaders have started integrating these elements into their leadership approach, combining them with traditional principles of modesty and collectivism (Wang & Zheng, 2021).The panorama of modest leadership in China has seen substantial changes in recent years, driven by both global influences and internal socio-economic transformations. During this era, there has been a blending of conventional Chinese leadership concepts with contemporary management

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methods, resulting in a distinctive transformation in the understanding and implementation of humble leadership.

The swift progress in technology has significantly influenced the development of leadership in China. The advent of digitalization and artificial intelligence has presented Chinese leaders with novel problems in effectively managing technologically proficient workforces and cultivating creativity. In this setting, humble leadership has expanded its scope to encompass not only the conventional qualities of modesty and self-awareness, but also to embrace technology advancements and foster a culture of ongoing learning and adjustment (Li & Long, 2018).Effect on the performance of subordinates: According to Wu's (2019) research conducted in a Chinese environment, psychological empowerment acts as a mediator in the relationship between transformational leadership and employees' job performance and organizational citizenship behavior. In their 2017 study, Wang and Zheng found that psychological empowerment acts as a mediator in the connection between perceived organizational support and the influence of organizational citizenship activity.

 Impact on the work behaviors of subordinates: Contemporary scholars are currently studying the impact of psychological empowerment on the work behavior of subordinates. They are particularly interested in exploring how aspects like innovation behavior, job engagement, and advising behavior are influenced by psychological empowerment. Research conducted by Spreitzer (1995), Janssen (2000), and Liu (2018) has demonstrated a favorable correlation between the degree of psychological empowerment and the extent of individual inventive activity. In their study, Yuan, and Wang (2019) discovered a favorable correlation between individual inventive activity and three elements of psychological empowerment: job meaning, self-efficacy, and autonomy. In their study, Zhang and Bartol (2019) discovered a favorable correlation between psychological empowerment and employees' inclination to participate in creative endeavors. According to Yang et al. (2013), the study revealed a favorable correlation between all four aspects of psychological empowerment and employees' innovative behavior. According to Yan's (2016) research, there is a favorable correlation between psychological empowerment and both employee in-role behavior and organizational citizenship conduct.

Furthermore, numerous studies have confirmed a positive correlation between various social environmental factors and employee innovative behavior. These factors include the external environment, employee innovation, supervisor support, organizational support, and colleague support. Additionally, it has been found that psychological empowerment acts as a mediator between these variables. This relationship has been supported by research conducted by Amabile (1988), Spreitzer (1995), and Liu and Shi (2019). Wei and Shi (2019) discovered that in the setting of Chinese culture, psychological empowerment played a partial mediating role in the connection between benevolent leadership and work engagement. Tong and Lu (2019) conducted a study including 325 organizations and discovered that autonomy, self-efficacy, and job impact, which are all aspects of psychological empowerment, partially mediate the connection between procedural justice and employee advising behavior. Chinese enterprises, particularly in technology, manufacturing, and services industries, have made innovation a top focus. The concept of humble leadership is being recognized as an effective catalyst for promoting a culture of creativity. Humble leaders in China foster creativity and innovation by promoting open communication, embracing failure as a chance for growth, and appreciating varied perspectives (Smith & Taylor, 2019).

The recent advancements in modest leadership in China exemplify an intricate interplay between conventional principles and contemporary ideas. Chinese enterprises are adapting to

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the challenges of globalization, technical advancements, and changes in generations, which is causing the concept of humble leadership to develop further. This progression is characterized by a heightened focus on inclusivity, adaptability, and a harmonious integration of authoritative and participative leadership styles. A recent study conducted by Wang et al. (2020) at multiple hotel chains in Beijing revealed that employees who were led by modest leaders reported more satisfaction with their fundamental psychological requirements. This, in turn, resulted in increased motivation and proactive behavior. Humble leadership cultivates a work atmosphere where external awards or recognition effortlessly align with individuals' inherent values and motivations, in accordance with the organic integration idea. In a study conducted by Liu and Zhang (2019) on Chinese hotel chains, it was discovered that humble leadership was associated with a greater level of internalized motivation among employees, resulting in a decrease in turnover intentions.

Within contemporary China, particularly with the implementation of economic reforms, the understanding of modest leadership has developed, blending traditional beliefs with current management theories. With the increasing globalization of Chinese enterprises, there is a growing trend of incorporating Western leadership approaches alongside native notions. Contemporary Chinese leaders are progressively acknowledging the significance of humility in leadership, not only as a moral virtue but also as a strategic instrument for managing and promoting innovation, employee involvement, and flexibility in the swiftly evolving global market (Li & Long, 2018). The future of modest leadership in China hinges on effectively amalgamating these varied components to construct robust, inventive, and internationally competitive enterprises. The rapid expansion of the hospitality sector in China necessitates the implementation of inventive leadership approaches to effectively adapt to the ever-changing market conditions and the evolving requirements of employees. Given the swift growth of the hotel industry, it is crucial to comprehend the aspects that motivate employees to exhibit proactive behavior. The complex interplay between personal motivation and the external environment is especially relevant when examining leadership styles, such as humble leadership, in organizational contexts such as Chinese hotel chains.

DISCUSSION

Despite undergoing three phases of development, the study of modest leadership is still considered to be in its early stages. A literature assessment indicates that the field has progressed from studying humility to examining humble leadership as a distinct leadership style. The leader's humble demeanor and strong emphasis on humility are rooted in the "humility trait". This quality of humility can be observed in various leadership styles, including transformational, servant, participative, developmental, and honest leadership styles. Owens et al. (2013) contend that humble leadership is distinct from temporary emotional displays, since it entails consistent interpersonal behaviors that are observable by others. These behaviors include leaders maintaining an unbiased perception of themselves, actively valuing others, and being receptive to new information. Qualitative research is employed as a theoretical framework to outline three key aspects of humble leadership. Firstly, it involves recognizing one's own limitations, shortcomings, and faults. Secondly, it involves acknowledging the strengths and contributions of employees. Lastly, it entails having the humility to continuously learn. Nevertheless, the researchers did not create a measurement system for modest leadership in this particular investigation. Owens et al. conducted a subsequent investigation in which they created a humility scale consisting of three dimensions and nine measures. This scale was still administered to a group of employees from the United States. This study represents the initial empirical investigation on the behavior of leader humility within a contemporary Western setting.

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Ou (2011) conducted a study to examine how leader humility affects the behavior and performance of middle managers. In this study, leader humility was described as having self-awareness and a commitment to self-improvement, showing respect for others, and actively supporting their growth, and prioritizing the greater good over personal interests. Oc (2015) et al. conducted a study on leader humility using a sample from Singapore. They identified nine characteristics that are associated with humble leaders: 1) having an accurate self-evaluation; 2) acknowledging the strengths and accomplishments of their subordinates; 3) being open to receiving advice and actively working on improving their own behavior; 4) leading by setting a good example and by modeling desired behaviors; 5) displaying humility and modesty; 6) fostering collaboration based on shared interests; 7) demonstrating care and empathy towards subordinates; 8) showing respect towards subordinates and treating everyone fairly; and 9) being willing to provide guidance and assistance to subordinates. Four unique dimensions within the Singaporean organizational context are: leading by example and modeling, being humble and modest, working together based on the team's interests, and caring for subordinates with empathy while being willing to guide and assist them.

Lee et al. (2016) conducted a qualitative exploratory study to examine the structural aspects of humble leadership from a follower-centered viewpoint. A survey was conducted among 68 corporate employees to investigate the characteristics of humble leadership in the Chinese organizational context. The study identified four elements of humble leadership: virtuous role model, humble behavior, calm and wise, and submissive attitude. Moral exemplification pertains to the leader demonstrating ethical behavior through both verbal and non-verbal means to their subordinates. For instance, the leader should persuade people via their moral excellence, led by example, refrain from claiming credit for the achievements of their subordinates, and avoid engaging in superficial displays.

Humble behavior primarily entails the leader's ability to objectively assess both himself and others, recognize their own limitations, take input from their staff, and maintain a receptive attitude towards acquiring new knowledge. For instance, the leader can proactively assume accountability for workplace mistakes, willingly accept feedback from colleagues, and take the initiative to seek counsel from staff with unfamiliar business matters. Furthermore, he possesses the ability to demonstrate humility and appreciation for his subordinates. The primary emphasis lies in the leader's capacity to effectively address diverse workplace challenges with composure and appropriateness. For instance, refraining from boasting, adhering to ethical standards, maintaining composure when faced with challenges, and so on. Subordinate orientation refers to the leader's ability to empathize, connect, and provide support to subordinates in all facets of their professional life. As an illustration, they commend their subordinates promptly for their accomplishments, provide patient guidance in their tasks, demonstrate concern for their well-being and personal interests, and proactively assist them in resolving any issues they may encounter. According to their research, Chinese firms prioritize virtue and exhibit more subordinate-oriented behaviors. Additionally, they found that modest actions are more effective when accompanied by higher levels of leadership talent.

In 2011, Ou created the Leadership Humility Scale, consisting of 18 items distributed across 6 dimensions. Owens et al. (2013) created the Leadership Humility Scale, which consists of 9 items divided into 3 categories. These scales can be evaluated either by oneself or by others. Nevertheless, academics have contended that the method of self-assessment is conceptually paradoxical, as those who genuinely possess humility are improbable to ascribe the virtue of humility to themselves. Tangney's study also revealed that self-assessment exhibits worse internal consistency compared to other assessment.

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Consequently, it has been proposed that the most optimal strategy would involve employing alternative evaluation techniques, particularly those involving direct involvement of the individual being evaluated. An optimal method would involve assessing the evaluee by soliciting feedback from individuals, particularly those who have a close relationship with them (Exline et al., 2004; Davis et al., 2010). Humble leadership is ineffective in highly hierarchical organizations and in situations where the organization faces major threats and time constraints. In times of significant jeopardy and constrained time, a modest style of leadership will also prove ineffective. In contrast, businesses that foster a learning culture are more adept at leveraging the potential of humble leadership.

In their study, Kim and Fernandez (2023) examined the crucial significance of humble leadership in effectively managing crises. They emphasized how this type of leadership promotes the development of resilience and adaptation in the face of stormy circumstances. This is consistent with the study conducted by Harris and Mitchell (2023), which focused on the concept of humble leadership in remote work environments. Leaders that demonstrate self-awareness, receptiveness to input, and recognition of others efficiently manage the difficulties of remote work, ensuring team unity and productivity. According to Philips and Yang's (2023) comparative analysis, the expression of modest leadership varies across startups and established organizations. Humble leadership had a greater effect on creativity and risk-taking in startups, whereas in established firms, it had a major impact on organizational stability and employee loyalty.

Ford and Liu (2023) examined the concept of feedback receptivity within the context of humble leadership. They highlighted the importance of leaders who appreciate and actively seek feedback from others, as this promotes a culture of openness and effective communication within organizations. This fosters psychological empowerment among employees, resulting in increased engagement and proactive action. Miller and Chang (2022) determined colleague support to be a crucial element that enhances proactive behavior in circumstances defined by humble leadership. They contended that when leaders acknowledge and value the contributions of their team, it fosters a supportive environment where colleagues are more inclined to help one another, hence improving the overall performance of the team. The study conducted by Wallace and Turner (2022) emphasized the efficacy of humble leadership in many contexts. They discovered that leadership styles that intrinsically demonstrate tolerance and appreciation for other perspectives are essential for effectively managing multicultural teams, therefore improving organizational inclusion and effectiveness. Perez and Johnson (2022) examined the ethical aspects of humble leadership, emphasizing that it extends beyond personal characteristics and involves a moral and ethical approach to managing individuals, which is of great significance in the current corporate landscape. The study conducted by Clark and Gomez (2022) found that younger employees place a high importance on leaders that exhibit self-awareness and honesty. The shift in generations suggests an increasing inclination towards leadership approaches that emphasize collaboration and minimize hierarchy.

Proactive behavior refers to taking initiative and acting in advance to prevent problems or seize opportunities. In 2001, Frese provided a formal definition of employee initiative as a spontaneous work behavior where employees actively strive to improve themselves and their environment. This behavior involves perseverance, overcoming challenges, and making progress towards both organizational and personal objectives. It is distinguished by its spontaneity, perseverance, and ability to anticipate future events. Spontaneity refers to the ability of personnel to conduct tasks or activities independently and proactively without

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requiring explicit guidance or instructions from the business. Persistence refers to the quality of individuals demonstrating unwavering determination and effort in order to successfully accomplish the objectives set by the organization. Parker (2006) provided a concise definition of proactive behavior as a behavioral pattern characterized by three essential elements: spontaneity, anticipation, and change orientation. Specifically, proactive conduct exhibited by employees is characterized by self-directedness, future orientation, and the potential to bring about positive change. In 2008, Grant and Ashford provided a definition of proactive behavior as a behavioral pattern characterized by self-directedness, future orientation, and the potential to bring about positive transformation. Grant and Ashford (2008) provided a definition for employee-initiated behavior as proactive actions taken by employees to enhance their current work environment or establish a new one. This conduct involves actively questioning and challenging the existing norms rather than simply conforming to them.

Prior research on organizational performance has mostly focused on task performance, peripheral performance, adaptive performance, organizational citizenship conduct, and extra-role behavior. However, there has been comparatively little emphasis on individual proactive behavior, which highlights spontaneity. The topic of individual-initiated conduct, which highlights spontaneity, has received less attention. The majority of researchers have primarily concentrated on the manner in which employees embrace and adjust to both internal and external alterations within the organization, consequently influencing the organization's performance. However, there has been comparatively less emphasis on exploring how employees can independently and willingly undertake proactive initiatives for the benefit of the organization. Due to the flattening of organizational structures, increased complexity of work tasks, and intensified external competition, the operating environment for organizations has become more uncertain. Consequently, organizations must enhance their flexibility and innovation to effectively adapt to this uncertainty. This has resulted in a shift in the expectations that organizations have for their employees, as traditional job descriptions and qualifications are no longer adequate to fulfill organizational needs. Organizations require individuals that possess the ability to proactively inquire and actively participate in problem-solving endeavors. These employees should be capable of instigating innovation and driving change from lower levels of the organizational hierarchy. Moreover, they should demonstrate innovative problem-solving skills in intricate situations (Wei and Pan, 2012).

Raub and Robert (2017) found that employees who have a greater sense of empowerment, in terms of feeling that their work is meaningful, having confidence in their abilities, being able to make their own decisions, and having a significant influence, are more inclined to display proactive behaviors. The association between leadership style and proactive behavior among employees is frequently influenced by heightened job satisfaction and a sense of ownership over one's work. The study conducted by Montani et al. (2018) investigated the favorable impact of transformational leadership on proactive behavior. The study revealed that leaders that evoke inspiration, encourage intellectual thinking, and take into account the specific requirements of employees have a tendency to enhance employees' confidence and drive to actively participate in proactive activities. In a similar vein, Kim et al. (2019) showed that ethical leadership, which encompasses qualities such as justice, integrity, and moral management, fosters a trustworthy atmosphere that motivates employees to exhibit initiative and proactivity.

The proactive behaviors of individuals are influenced by the organizational proactive culture and climate. The study conducted by Newman et al. (2020) investigated the correlation between a forward-thinking organizational environment and employee proactivity. The results suggested that a

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workplace that places importance on innovation and creative thinking promotes the development of proactive behaviors among its employees. Furthermore, research has shown that corporate cultures that are supportive and flexible are beneficial for encouraging employee proactivity. These cultures create a secure space for employees to take risks and engage in innovative practices (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

Individual variations, encompassing personality features and personal values, also have a crucial impact on proactive action. Wu and Parker (2018) conducted a study that demonstrated a positive correlation between employees possessing a proactive mentality and their tendency to engage in proactive behaviors. This predisposition is frequently a result of their inherent drive and innate tendency towards transformation and enhancement. Furthermore, conscientiousness and openness to experience are personality traits that have been found to have a positive correlation with proactive behaviors (Bindl & Parker, 2010). In light of the rise of digitalization in the workplace, recent studies have also examined the impact of technology on proactive behavior. Zhang and Bartol (2019) discovered that incorporating advanced technology into work environments promotes proactive learning and innovative behaviors in employees. This implies that the integration of innovative technology in work processes can serve as a catalyst for proactive behavior.

Employees that possess a robust sense of responsibility are more inclined to exert diligent effort and demonstrate proactive behavior in fulfilling specified responsibilities due to their heightened sense of obligation. Additionally, they can proactively assess the current state of the firm and their personal attributes, and actively gather information and formulate action plans. Conversely, employees who lack a feeling of responsibility prioritize their immediate interests and make do with their current resources (Roberts, Chernyshenko, Stark, et al.). Chernyshenko, Stark, and Goldberg (2005). Neurotic employees exhibit greater vulnerability and are more susceptible to experiencing stress, worry, and even despair. Anxiety and depression can arise, and their capacity for regulation is limited. Therefore, in an uncertain environment, employees with high neuroticism are more inclined than those with low neuroticism to exert additional efforts, such as developing a thorough planning strategy, in order to alleviate their own stress and anxiety (Tamir, 2005). On the other hand, employees who are open-minded are more prone to engaging in proactive behaviors and actively setting goals. Additionally, open-minded individuals possess a broader perspective on life, prioritize independent thinking, and are receptive to change (Parker, 2005). Additionally, they possess a greater willingness to consider new ideas, prioritize the freedom of individual thinking, and exhibit a receptiveness towards change (Parker et al., 2010). Self-efficacy has an impact on individual proactive behaviors. Mao and Li's (2015) research demonstrated that self-efficacy could influence the proactive behaviors of newly hired employees. In a study conducted by Gmman et al. (2006), it was discovered that new employees who had a strong belief in their own abilities (high self-efficacy) performed better than those with low self-efficacy in proactive behaviors such as gathering information, communicating proactively, networking, and enhancing relationships with superiors. Furthermore, individual attitudes also play a role in proactive behaviors, as demonstrated by Chwartz et al. (2005), who showed that trust in the organization's cognitive and emotional aspects predicted employees' proactive and innovative behaviors. Parker and Collins (2010) demonstrated that individuals that possess a learning goal orientation display a greater inclination towards proactive behaviors in assuming accountability for change and innovation, as compared to employees with a performance goal orientation.

One explanation for this phenomenon is that employees who have a performance goal orientation tend to be risk-averse and hesitant to take initiative because they are afraid of failing

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or not meeting expectations. On the other hand, employees with a learning goal orientation are less afraid of failure and are more determined to persist in the face of setbacks. They view failures as opportunities for growth and use them as motivation to continue pursuing innovation. Employees who possess a future-oriented mindset exhibit a greater level of initiative and are more determined and timelier in preparing for the future, especially in situations of high environmental uncertainty (Aspinwall, 2005). Individual motivation can also impact proactive behavior. In Tamir's (2005) research, it was discovered that employees who engaged in proactive activities like goal setting, career planning, and adapting their interactions with their surroundings demonstrated a stronger sense of corporate identification. Similarly, Strauss et al. (2009) discovered that corporate identity serves as a driving force for employees' career goals, leading them to engage in proactive activities that are focused on advancing their careers.

Fritz and Sonnentag (2007) demonstrated that positive affect serves as a "reservoir" and has a lasting impact on the encouragement of individual proactive behaviors. For instance, positive emotions like happiness and joy experienced by an employee on a given day can elicit proactive behaviors in the following days, rather than only for a brief period. Bindl and Parker (2010) similarly discovered that emotions influence proactive behavior, with active emotions fostering greater levels of proactive behavior, while employees with low emotional activity tend to exhibit less proactivity.

Research has indicated that proactive behavior is influenced by environmental uncertainty. Uncertain environments are characterized by factors such as unclear plans, irregular processes, inadequate guidance, and organizational changes. In such contexts, employees tend to display more proactive behaviors in order to reduce uncertainty and gain a better understanding of their surroundings. A study conducted by Dayt and Schlekher (2006) discovered that employees facing uncertainty, such as role ambiguity, job changes, and organizational changes, are more likely to engage in proactive behaviors to address the ambiguity of their situations. This is corroborated by the research conducted by Griffin, Neal, and Parker (2007), which revealed that employees facing ambiguous circumstances demonstrated a greater inclination towards proactive behaviors. Specifically, they engaged in proactive communication, proactive work adjustment, and proactive networking as means to mitigate environmental uncertainty.

Leadership style is an important antecedent variable that influences employees' proactive behavior. Rank et al. (2019) and Liao (2019) found that transformational leadership was positively related to employees' proactive behavior as an era-appropriate leadership style that promotes employees' proactive behavior by enriching their roles and enhancing their sense of self-efficacy. Zhang (2019) found that self-sacrificing leadership has a positive impact on three aspects of employee suggestion, proactive responsibility, and feedback seeking. Cui et al. (2019) found that integrity leadership was positively related to employee proactive behavior. Zhu (2019) argued that with the development of flattening organizations, organizational structures are becoming increasingly decentralized, and decentralization of organizations is becoming increasingly a reality. The resulting distributed leadership model emphasizes responsibility sharing and full empowerment, strongly downplays the leadership-employee boundary, and values the value and contribution of each employee, which is conducive to stimulating employees' creative motivation and proactive behavior. Gao et al. (2016) argue that transformational leadership, as a leadership behavior appropriate to the development of the times, can significantly and positively influence employees' proactive behaviors. In contrast, Xu et al. (2019) showed that leaders' abusive management can negatively affect employees' proactive behavior.

Frese, Kring, Soose, and Zempel (1996) created a self-reported proactive behavior scale. This scale includes statements such as "I am willing to take initiative in solving problems" and "When faced with difficulties, I actively seek timely solutions". Griffin et al. (2007) revised the Proactive Behavior Self-Statement Inventory, which assesses proactive behavior in individuals, departments, and organizations. It consists of nine questions across three dimensions. Another scale, developed by Frese, Fay, and Hilburgr (1997), consists of seven items. Parker et al. (2006) developed the Employee Initiated Behavior Scale, which contains eight items.

CONCLUSION
Empirical research repeatedly shows that conscientiousness has a moderating effect on the relationship between humble leadership and proactive action. It was observed that conscientiousness enhances the influence of modest leadership on proactive behavior in many cultural contexts. Conscientiousness serves as both a moderator and a mediator in the connection between humble leadership and proactive action. Conscientiousness served as a mediator, partially elucidating the reason for the positive impact of modest leadership on proactive behavior. Leaders who displayed humility by recognizing their colleagues' skills and appreciating their contributions significantly boosted employees' self-efficacy views, especially among those with elevated levels of conscientiousness. Organizations that prioritize conscientiousness as a cultural value may see a stronger influence of conscientiousness on the connection between humble leadership and proactive conduct. The impact of conscientiousness as a moderating factor may differ based on the leadership style demonstrated by humble leaders. To summarize, conscientiousness is essential in regulating and facilitating the connection between modest leadership and employees' proactive conduct. Trait Activation Theory and Social Cognitive Theory can theoretically justify this behavior. Empirical data repeatedly confirms that conscientiousness enhances the beneficial effects of modest leadership on proactive behavior. Comprehending the moderating and mediating influence of conscientiousness holds significant significance for the advancement of leadership skills and organizational procedures. Organizations can gain advantages by recognizing and fostering diligent personnel, especially when fostering a culture of modest leadership. Nevertheless, it is imperative to take into account contextual variables that can impact the magnitude of this phenomenon and customize leadership tactics accordingly. Subsequent investigations should delve into the intricacies of how conscientiousness acts as a moderator in various organizational settings and industries. Longitudinal research can offer valuable insights into the enduring impact of humble leadership and conscientiousness on proactive behavior, so enhancing our comprehensive grasp of this intricate interrelationship.

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